

For Immediate Release
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**FREE ALEC GUINNESS FILM FESTIVAL AND OSKAR FISCHINGER
ANIMATED SHORTS HIGHLIGHT DECEMBER FILM SERIES AT CMA**

CLEVELAND — Dec. 26 through 31, a *free* film festival at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) will celebrate the life and work of British actor Alec Guinness, who died in August at the age of 86. “He had an uncanny ability to lose himself in roles,” notes John Ewing, CMA’s film program coordinator. “Guinness also excelled at both comic and dramatic roles, and our week-long series contains sterling examples of both.”

Animated shorts by Oskar Fischinger (1900–1967), a German-born artist known for his abstract animated films and his work on Disney’s *Fantasia*, will be also featured in CMA’s December film series. “Decades before computer graphics and music videos, Fischinger invented a kind of ‘visual music,’” says Ewing. “Patterns and shapes were married to recordings of jazz and classical music.” To mark Fischinger’s centennial year, The iotaCenter in Los Angeles is circulating three programs of Fischinger shorts (and experimental films inspired by them) to art museums around the United States. The programs are entitled *Masterworks* (the 6th), *Rarities* (the 13th), and *Legacy* (the 20th).

Three new feature films from Iran, Brazil, and the United States — all Cleveland premieres — will also be shown during the month.

All films will take place in the Lecture Hall, Recital Hall, or Gartner Auditorium. Admission to the Guinness films is *free*. Admission to the Fischinger screenings and the new movies is \$6 (\$4 CMA members).

For more information about the CMA and its events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.clevelandart.org.

Complete December film listings follow.

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December Films (\$6, \$4 CMA members; Guinness films free.)

Friday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 3, 2 p.m.

Two Women (Iran, 1999, color, subtitles, 96 min.) Directed by Tahmineh Milani. Two female Iranian architecture students of different social classes take divergent paths in life due to limits imposed by their patriarchal society. This outspoken feminist drama was a sensation in Iran. "An angry and heartbreaking film." — Roger Ebert. Cleveland premiere.

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m.

Oskar Fischinger: Masterpieces (Germany/USA, 1927-47, b&w/color, approx. 70 min) Directed by Oskar Fischinger. Classic abstract animated films by the German-born artist, many wedded to classical music and jazz. Program includes *Composition in Blue*, *Motion Painting No. 1*, and 14 others, all in restored 35mm prints. Videotaped introduction by Fischinger biographer Dr. William Moritz.

Friday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 3 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2 p.m.

Orfeu (Brazil, 1999, color, subtitles, 110 min.) Directed by Carlos Diegues. The myth of the singer Orpheus and his beloved Eurydice is transposed to a Rio de Janeiro shantytown during Carnival in this new film version of the classic play that became the Oscar-winning movie *Black Orpheus* in 1959. Rejecting the pretty primitivism and the poor-but-happy romanticism of the earlier movie, *Orfeu* augments its sambas and spectacle with a grittier, truer portrait of Brazilian slum life, including drugs, cops, and hip hop. Cleveland premiere.

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

Oskar Fischinger: Rarities (Germany/USA, 1923-60, b&w/color, 91 min.) Directed by Oskar Fischinger. A program of lesser-known shorts, advertising films, and fragments by the German-born abstract animator. Program also includes Cindy Keefer's 20-minute documentary *Oskar Fischinger: The Creative Spirit* (USA, 2000).

Friday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.

Songcatcher (USA, 2000, color, 109 min.) Directed by Maggie Greenwald, with Janet McTeer, Aidan Quinn, and Pat Carroll. A special advance screening of a Sundance hit that tells the true story of musicologist Lily Penleric, who traversed the hills and backroads of Appalachia early in this century recording ancient folk songs for posterity. With Iris DeMent and Taj Mahal. Cleveland premiere. Screening courtesy of Trimark Pictures. Proceeds benefit the CMA film program.

Wednesday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.

Oskar Fischinger: Legacy (various countries, 1950-94, color, approx. 90 min.) Various directors. A program of short animated and experimental films inspired by the work of German-born abstract animator Oskar Fischinger. Program includes movies by John Whitney, Harry Smith, Len Lye, Jordan Belson, Norman McLaren, and Mary Ellen Bute, among others.

Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2 p.m.

Oliver Twist (Britain, 1948, b&w, 116 min.) Directed by David Lean, with John Howard Davies, Alec Guinness, Robert Newton, and Anthony Newly. An orphaned waif in Victorian London falls in with a gang of juvenile thugs and pickpockets in this exemplary adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic. Guinness is an unforgettable Fagin, though charges of anti-Semitism initially caused the film to be cut for U.S. release.

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2 p.m.

Kind Hearts and Coronets (Britain, 1949, b&w, 104 min.) Directed by Robert Hamer, with Dennis Price, Alec Guinness, and Valerie Hobson. A lowly lord in a titled British family who's ninth in line for the dukedom decides to eliminate the intervening eight — all played by Alec Guinness! A witty black comedy, brilliantly executed (so to speak).

Thursday, Dec. 28, 2 p.m.

The Horse's Mouth (Britain, 1958, color, 93 min.) Directed by Ronald Neame, with Alec Guinness, Kay Walsh, and Renee Houston. Guinness plays antisocial painter Gulley Jimson, a scruffy genius who will stop at nothing to pursue his art, in this effective adaptation of Joyce Cary's novel. Guinness also scripted.

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Friday, Dec. 29, 2 p.m. *Our Man in Havana* (Britain, 1960, b&w, 107 min.) Directed by Carol Reed, with Alec Guinness, Burl Ives, Maureen O'Hara, Ernie Kovacs, and Noel Coward. A vacuum cleaner salesman becomes a spy in this amusing adaptation of Graham Greene's novel.

Saturday, Dec. 30, 2 p.m.

Tunes of Glory (Britain, 1960, color, 106 min.) Directed by Ronald Neame, with Alec Guinness, John Mills, and Susannah York. In reputedly his favorite role, Guinness plays a well-liked, easygoing leader of a peacetime Highland Scottish regiment who must give way to a disciplined British martinet. A stellar clash-of-wills drama.

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2 p.m.

Last Holiday (Britain, 1950, b&w, 89 min.) Directed by Henry Cass, with Alec Guinness, Beatrice Campbell, and Kay Walsh. Told he has only a short time to live, a clerk decides to live it up at a posh resort. Screenplay by J.B. Priestley.

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